

AUG 9 2004

31 July 2004

NE NPR-A Amendment Planning Team
Bureau of Land Management (930)
222 West 7th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599

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TESHEKPUK LAKE SURFACE PROTECTION AREA

We are writing to voice our opposition to the BLM proposal to reduce the size of the Teshekpuke Lake Surface Protection Area from its current size of nearly 858,000 acres to 213,000 acres.

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Alternatives

The TLSPA encompasses a complex of wetlands that is crucial to thousands of molting geese, a major herd of caribou, and many other wildlife species. The caribou herd is an important resource for subsistence hunters on the North Slope. Oilfield development in this area would negatively impact these animals. We urge you not to reduce the size of the Protection Area.

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Planning

The BLM proposal does not appear to be based on any credible scientific evidence that reduction in size, increased human contact, and industrial development will not harm the wildlife. This is the conclusion of the National Research Council and the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

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To be more blunt, the proposal seems to us to be yet another example of how the Bush administration has perverted the use of science in deliberations about rules and policy – a continuing practice documented earlier this year by the Union of Concerned scientists (for details, you could consult their web site: www.ucsusa.org).

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We urge you to give the creatures who inhabit and depend upon the TLSPA their due consideration in this important decision.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Overholt
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